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Austria

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Snapshot

Area

Situated in Central Europe, Austria covers an area of 83,879 square kilometers.

Population

8,430,558 (2013 estimate)

Official Language

German

Ethnic Groups

Austrians 91.1%, former Yugoslavs 4% (incl. Croatians, Slovenes, Serbs, and Bosniaks), Turks 1.6%, German 0.9%, other or unspecified 2.4% (2001 census)

Median Age

43.9 years (2013 estimate)

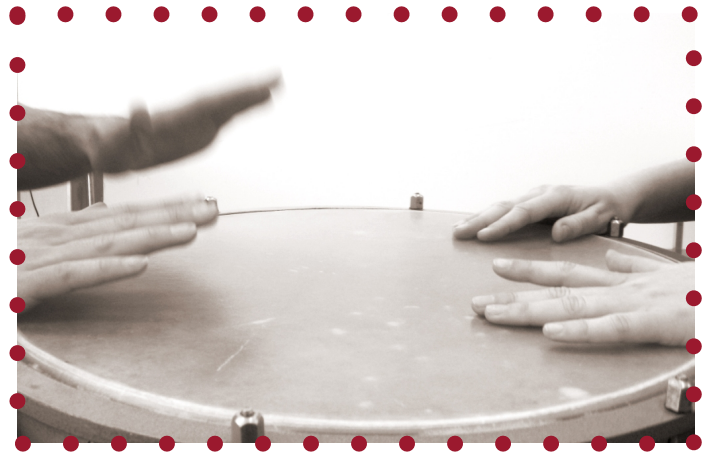
Children under 5

5.1 % (2001 census)

Sources

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The World Factbook
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“Das Finden einer musikalischen Spielform, die von den Äußerungen des Kindes ausgeht, die sie einbettet und damit ‚sinnvoll‘ macht, bietet den Spielraum, in dem sich zwischenmenschliche Begegnung ereignen kann.”*

~Karin Schumacher

Demographics

The beginnings of training and clinical practice in music therapy date back more than fifty years, making Austria one of the pioneering countries for music therapy in Europe. In 1959, the first music therapy training program opened at what was then the Vienna Academy of Music. Nowadays, music therapy training programs are offered at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, IMC University of Applied Sciences Krams, and the University of Arts Graz.

Music therapy has been regulated as a healthcare profession by the Austrian Music Therapy Law since July 1, 2009. Currently (May 2013), there are 290 registered music therapists in Austria. According to a survey conducted by the Austrian Association of Music Therapists in late 2011, approximately 36% of

all music therapists work with children and adolescents, though no solid data are available about the total number of music therapists working in the subdomain of early childhood (i.e., with children under 5 years of age).

Background Information

Young children have been one of the main client groups from very early on. Music therapy pioneers in the late 1950s closely collaborated with eminent physicians in mental health such as Dr. Andreas Rett. Today's music therapists work as officially recognized health care professionals in diverse fields of early childhood intervention. Early childhood is also an important area within training, with students acquiring specific knowledge and practical experience in several courses and practicum settings (e.g., developmental psychology,

*[Finding a musical play form that develops from the child's expressive behaviors and embeds them, thus makes them meaningful, provides the playing space in which interpersonal connections can take place.] ~Karin Schumacher

childhood psychosomatic disorders, neonatal intensive care).

Common Approaches

Music therapy in Austria is strongly influenced by various psychotherapy approaches such as psychodynamic, humanistic, and systemic traditions. Additionally, developmental theories derived from infant research and attachment research inform today's clinical practice within early childhood music therapy. Most music therapists working within early childhood in Austria do so in an individual setting using improvisation, musical games or role play, familiar or improvised songs, and various receptive methods to work towards individual therapeutic goals. Modified receptive methods are used in music therapy in NICU settings to positively affect the mental and physical development of infants at risk and to foster bonding between child and caregivers. Regular discussions with parents/guardians and collaboration with other professionals involved in the child's treatment and care form an important part of music therapy practice. Some music therapists also provide treatment for young children with their parents to promote the parent-child relationship. Music therapy for young children is provided both in clinical settings (e.g., hospitals, child development centers, private practice) and in educational environments (e.g., kindergartens, pre-schools). Although music therapy is funded as part of the treatment offered in institutional settings, music therapy in private

practice is not yet reimbursed by Austrian health insurance.

Prominent Literature

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About the Authors



Monika Geretsegger, certified music therapist and certified clinical and health psychologist,

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Thomas Stegemann, Univ.-Prof. Dr. med, is a child and adolescent psychiatrist as well as a licensed music therapist. He also studied guitar at the Musicians Institute in Los Angeles, USA. Since March 2011, he is Professor of Music Therapy and head of the Department of Music Therapy at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, Austria.

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